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[Battie, John Minor]

## TO THE WHIGS OF VIRGINIA.

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The undersigned, a member of the convention lately held in the city of Richmond for the purpose of considering the propriety of holding a National Convention and nominating a Whig candidate to that body, differing with a majority of the Convention, in the conclusions to which they came, feels impelled, by the strongest sense of obligation to himself, and to those whose views he represented, to make the following statement of facts, which he trusts will be done in a spirit and temper becoming his own position, and with all the respect fairly due to that body.

One of the chief objects of a convention is to ascertain and reflect the views of a majority of those who are to be represented in the convention; and all conventions must fail of their purpose, and in their usefulness, when such rules shall be adopted as shall serve rather to prevent, than elicit a full expression of public sentiment. We hold that nothing can be more clear, than that when members of the same political family are collected together for the purpose of common communion and interchange of sentiment, with a view, *not of making*, but ascertaining the opinions of the majority of those represented, that the adoption of no rule can be justified that will serve to smother rather than draw forth the public mind, or that will furnish the opportunity for a minority to control the action of a majority.

It is understood that the late Whig convention was invited by a resolution adopted by the Whig members of the Legislature, in the month of December last, chiefly with the view of ascertaining whether the Whig party of Virginia would endorse the recommendation of General Taylor.

It might naturally have been expected, that when this invitation had been responded to, by so large a portion of the people, that those who invited it would have been among the first to see that their voice should be heard, and their views carried out, as they had been expressed in their primary assemblies—whether they did so or not, will form the subject of this paper in part.

It had been broadly represented, by the Whigs in the Legislature, that General Taylor would be a most acceptable candidate to the Whig party of the State; and they had invoked the judgment of the people upon their own act, by asking them to send up delegates to a convention to ratify or disclaim what they had done.

Among the first acts of the convention was the appointment of a committee for the purpose of recommending rules, &c., for its government; which committee proposed to give to each county, city, and election district in the State, the same representation that it had in the House of Delegates.

This proposition appeared to the undersigned so obviously imperfect and delusive, that he felt constrained to oppose it; he not only undertook to show its inequality, but that *that* very inequality must of itself mislead the judgment, and bring the convention to a false conclusion; or, in other words, defeat the object professed, of ascertaining the true condition of the public mind.

It was urged, in opposition to the resolution, that the ratio of representation, as established by the Constitution for the House of Delegates, could bear no affinity to the convention, because that representation was based on the entire population of each county, including as well those who would be represented in the Democratic convention, which was soon to assemble, as our own party,

nable ground for not making a nomination at that time, even on the part of those representing a constituency previously favorable to the nomination of General Taylor, as they had not seen that declaration from under his own pen when such preference was expressed, and that it should be turned over to the National Convention, in order that the full import of that letter might be fairly understood.

The undersigned has no disposition to comment further on this letter here, and therefore he submits it, as he finds it, to the consideration of the Whigs of Virginia. It bears date five months after his letter to Mr. Ingersoll, which has also been published, in which he says in one part he is a Whig, and another that he is no politician—a political paradox which I do not profess to understand.

*"Taylor convention in Pennsylvania.*—The action of this body, which met at Harrisburg on the 22d instant, is given, in brief, in the following telegraphic despatch:

"HARRISBURG, February 22.

" The Taylor Convention assembled here to-day. James M. Porter was chosen as President. About fifty delegates were present, mostly from Philadelphia. An electoral ticket has been agreed upon. Senatorial delegates, Judge Bucher, of Harrisburg, and Judge Spuler, of Harrisburg. First district, Thos. D. Grover; second, Dr. K. J. Mitchell; third, James Peters; fourth, J. Sidney Jones. Among the others are H. W. Smith, of Berks; Luther Kedder, of Luzerne; Judge Burnside, of Centre; Thos. C. Miller, of Cumberland, &c.

" A letter from General Taylor, dated the 30th ultimo, to P. S. Smith, was read, as follows :

" BATON ROUGE, LA., January 30, 1848.

" SIR : Your communication of the 15th instant has been received, and the suggestions therein offered duly considered.

" In reply to your inquiries I have again to repeat, that I have neither the power nor the desire to dictate to the American people the exact manner in which they should proceed to nominate me for the Presidency of the United States.

" If they desire such a result, they must adopt the means best suited, in their opinion, to the consummation of the purpose; and if they think fit to bring me before them for this office, through their legislatures, mass meetings, or conventions, I cannot object to their designating those bodies as Whig, Democratic, or Native; but, being thus nominated, I must insist on the condition—and my position on this point is immutable—that I shall not be brought forward by them as the candidate of their party, or considered as the exponent of their party doctrines.

" In conclusion, I have to repeat, that if I were nominated for the Presidency by any body of my fellow-citizens, designated by any name they might choose to adopt, I should esteem it an honor, and would accept such nomination, provided it had been made entirely independent of party considerations. I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR.

" PETER SKEN SMITH, ESQ."

Such was the effect produced by this letter, together with other matter that had been presented by the undersigned, that the friends of Mr. Clay indulged a well grounded hope that they would ultimately succeed in having the whole subject transferred to the National Convention for its consideration, uninfluenced by any expression of preference for Gen. Taylor. And under that feeling, with an anxious desire to preserve the unity of the party, and that conciliation, harmony, and compromise might characterize the deliberations of the convention, he submitted the following preamble and resolutions as a substitute for the resolution of the committee, accompanied with earnest appeals to our friends to be satisfied with the delegation that had been appointed to the Philadelphia Convention, and to let them go untrammelled by any expression of preference for either. The following is the substitute referred to, and it is submitted to the Whigs of Virginia, if there be any dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the convention, who are responsible for it; and whether the friends of Mr. Clay, or those of General Taylor, proved themselves the more practicable and conciliatory towards those of the Whig party differing from them? If there are disorganizers in the party, it is submitted whether it can be applied to us, or those who have introduced a stranger into the camp without sufficient endorsement, and who insists, if he is nominated, it must be independent of all party considerations, and that he will not be the exponent of our party doctrines. It must not be for-

gotten that every letter so formidably arrayed in the published proceedings of the Buena Vista festival at Philadelphia were written prior to the publication of either of his letters contained in this article. What effect these letters may have produced remains to be seen.

"Whereas a diversity of opinion seems unfortunately to exist among the Whigs of this State on the subject of the relative availability of the distinguished individuals whose names have been presented as candidates for the next Presidency, which it is essential to the best interests of the country, and perhaps the perpetuation of the party in this State, should be harmoniously settled, but which this convention is not prepared to decide; and whereas the Whigs of Virginia have implicit confidence in the integrity and wisdom of the National Convention, which is to assemble in the city of Philadelphia on the 7th day of June next, that will have more ample means and extensive information from which to make a judicious selection of a candidate upon whom the Whigs of the entire country can rally with a certainty of success—therefore,

"Resolved, That it is inexpedient that this convention should express any preference for either of the individuals whose names have been presented and canvassed as suitable candidates for the Presidency.

"Resolved, That the members of this convention hereby pledge their best exertions to secure the success of whomsoever may be the nominee of the National Convention."

### THE EFFECTS OF LIGHTNING.

The undersigned has authority for saying that, about this time of the proceedings of the convention, Mr. John S. Gallaher, well known in Virginia as among the first to raise the flag of General Taylor at the head of three papers under his control, and perhaps the most uncompromising of his friends anywhere to be found, was prepared to offer a resolution of *compromise*, by which no preference was to be expressed, which would have terminated all difficulty between the contending parties, when a most unpropitious and unfortunate circumstance occurred, that gave a decided and overwhelming influence to the action of the convention.

The undersigned disclaims all purpose to impute intentional misrepresentation to the gentleman through whose instrumentality the misrepresentation was made to the convention, but the facts as they occurred are too important to be withheld from the public. They exercised too large an influence over the judgment and decision of the convention, to be omitted. They must occupy the same prominence here that they did in the convention; for he holds that he would be unfaithful to his trust, and especially to the friends of Mr. Clay every where, if by forbearance he were to permit the claims of Mr. Clay or his strength to be prejudiced by any misunderstanding or misstatement that was made.

In the course of the discussion much contradictory testimony had been introduced on either side, to show the relative strength of each of the candidates in other States. It was the question of *availability*, in a large degree, upon which a considerable portion of the convention were anxious to be informed, in order to bring their minds to a satisfactory conclusion upon the propriety of adopting the resolution of preference, or the substitute proposed. For, when Mr. John Janney remarked that he presumed every member of the convention preferred Mr. Clay if *available*, he paused for a reply—four gentlemen only responded in the negative; which he observed, by saying, there are four gentlemen only in this convention who do not prefer Henry Clay—am I right? To which many affirmatives, and no negative response was given. So that it could have been with them only a question of *availability*.

In the course of the discussion, Kentucky and North Carolina had been referred to, and the undersigned had stated, that arrangements had been made by the friends of General Taylor to receive by telegraphic despatch information from the Kentucky Convention, that General Taylor had been nominated by that body; that it had been looked for for twenty-four hours or more, and that it had not yet arrived, and he ventured the prediction that *it would not arrive*; for he had reason to believe Kentucky would do precisely what the

friends of Mr. Clay were pressing on that convention to do, to wit, appoint their delegates to the National Convention without instructions, and without an expression of preference for either, as she would be willing to take either that the National Convention might designate.

After this, and just before the conclusion of Mr. Preston's speech, he exultingly proclaimed—"THE TELEGRAPHIC DESPATCH HAS ARRIVED; KENTUCKY HAS GONE OUT AND OUT FOR OLD ZAC!"

Shout upon shout followed the announcement; and when the uproar had subsided, the speaker continued—"BOTH CONVENTIONS HAVE NOMINATED OLD ZAC, and now my lips are unsealed; I may say what I would not have said two hours ago—but what I have long known—that only three members of the Kentucky Legislature were opposed to him."

Such an announcement, at such a time, with such an air of triumph, of the defection of Mr. Clay's own State, where his popularity had known no bounds, produced such an effect as may be better imagined than described. When the long-continued cheering and shouting on the part of Gen. Taylor's friends had subsided, the speaker resumed—"AND ANOTHER TELEGRAPHIC DESPATCH HAS ARRIVED; NORTH CAROLINA, TOO, HAS NOMINATED OLD ZAC!" This is certainly the substance, and, as nearly as I can recollect, the language used, in which I am confirmed by many with whom I have consulted, and especially by other printed accounts that I have seen.

Here the friends of Gen. Taylor seemed to be intoxicated with success. Nothing could stem or arrest the torrent; for we could not doubt that the despatches received justified the declarations made; and while they were calculated to disparage all the estimates and predictions made by the friends of Mr. Clay, at the same time it seemed to satisfy the Convention as to the question of *availability*. An adjournment was asked for until after dinner, that the minds of the members might become settled and sobered by reflection; for discussion at that time, and to the temper indicated, would have been worse than useless. It was the desire of the undersigned again to have addressed the Convention. It refused to adjourn, but with commendable courtesy agreed to hear anything we had to say at that time, but expressed a determination to pass the resolution before adjournment. The discussion was not further prosecuted, except for a few minutes. Among the friends of Mr. Clay, who came instructed, and determined to support him to the last, many gave way under this accumulated evidence of want of availability, and said it was of no use—the question of *availability* was settled, and they were ready to vote for the resolution of preference for Gen. Taylor.

This is a true narrative of what occurred, and such it is believed as will be recognised by every member of the Convention.

Now, suppose it had been as represented—that Gen. Taylor had received a nomination from the Conventions of Kentucky and North Carolina—how did that operate to make him the choice of Virginia, when they knew nothing of what had transpired in Kentucky and North Carolina, and when they did not doubt that either Gen. Taylor or Mr. Clay could obtain both States if nominated by a National Convention? Moreover, neither Kentucky nor North Carolina had seen the Peter Sken Smith letter above referred to; for there had not been time; and if both Kentucky and North Carolina would have voted for either Mr. Clay or Gen. Taylor, what influence should such a nomination have exercised with that body in settling the question then at issue between us—whether the evidence before us justified the declaration that Gen. Taylor was the choice of the Whigs of Virginia for the Presidency of the United States? For it is believed that if left to the Whigs of Virginia to elect a President, the vote for Mr. Clay would be so nearly unanimous, that those opposed to him would never let it be known.

But what will be the amazement of those members of the Convention who acted under the state of feeling above described, when it is announced to them that THE TELEGRAPHIC DESPATCH HAD — NOT ARRIVED! that the Kentucky Convention had NOT NOMINATED OLD ZAC! and that the Kentucky Convention had expressed no preference for either, but had only done what it had been predicted by the undersigned it would do, and what we all asked the Virginia Convention to be satisfied with? And how will their amazement be increased, when they are told that THE OTHER TELEGRAPHIC DESPATCH HAD NOT ARRIVED from North Carolina! and that NORTH CAROLINA HAD NOT NOMINATED OLD ZAC! and that the Convention of that State had at that time not acted at all, but has since acted, and *that Convention* is understood to have been *decidedly favorable to Mr. Clay* by a majority of three-fourths at least!

That A telegraphic despatch had arrived, both from Kentucky and North Carolina, is no doubt correct; but did they justify the declarations based upon them, is the question? I give them as they appeared in the public prints of the city of Richmond—the Republican and Whig—on the following morning, which, when seen, created as much surprise as the announcement founded upon them had occasioned the day before. It will be seen, that from North Carolina, somebody, (God knows who,) in communicating with the Baltimore Sun, a locofoco paper, had expressed it *as his belief*, that a majority of the Convention were in favor of Gen. Taylor; and this telegraphic information, on its passage through Richmond, was caught at by somebody, and magnified into a nomination of Gen. Taylor, and was no doubt so communicated to Mr. Preston; but that those *who gave him the information knew better*, or ought to have known better, cannot be doubted, and it certainly requires explanation.

Here are the despatches:

#### DESPATCHES EXTRAORDINARY.

*Kentucky.*—A Telegraphic despatch, received yesterday, announced that the Whig State Convention of Kentucky has appointed delegates to the National Convention favorable to Gen. Taylor—and that the TAYLOR Convention, which met on the same day, in Frankfort, united in their appointment.

— A Telegraphic despatch from Raleigh to the Baltimore Sun, states that Charles Manley, Esq., of Raleigh, has been nominated as the Whig candidate for Governor of North Carolina; and the despatch adds, that a decided majority of the Convention were in favor of General Taylor for the next Presidency.

We forbear to make any further comments on this extraordinary state of things, by which such a result was arrived at.

#### MR. CLAY IN KENTUCKY.

It now appears, however, not only from the public prints, but from private letters received from many quarters, that an overwhelming majority of the Kentucky convention were decidedly *friendly to the nomination of Mr. Clay*, and nothing prevented his nomination, if any nomination had been made, but a misapprehension of his position, occasioned by letters received from Washington that Mr. Clay “*would retire from the contest* so soon as he reached home;” so that it will be perceived that in Kentucky, as elsewhere, Mr. Clay has been overslaughed by his position being misunderstood, whether designed or otherwise; and that he continues to be, as he always has been, the *favorite and choice* of Kentucky for the highest office in their gift.

Developments are daily coming to light to exhibit his increased strength, and the gradual decline of Gen. Taylor’s popularity as a Whig candidate; even at this moment we have another letter from Gen. Taylor which, while it will elevate him in our estimation as a man of honor and consistency, must

forever destroy him as a candidate for the Presidency by the *Whig party*, and that his nomination, it is to be apprehended, may upon the instant annihilate the Whig party, as a party, forever. Let those who are for such a disbandment of our party organization persist in their mischievous and ruinous course; but, for one, I am resolved to struggle to the last moment for the perpetuation and success of that party with which I have been identified, and done battle from its origin.

In this connection it is deemed important to attach the subjoined statements from the Louisville Journal, a warm Taylor paper, to show the feeling in the Kentucky convention, which was said to have nominated General Taylor OUT AND OUT:

*"To the Editors of the Louisville Journal.*

"GENTLEMEN: In your paper of this morning you publish a letter from Frankfort over the signature of A., in which there is the following statement:

"It was generally understood in the *Whig State Convention*, from declarations by the friends of Mr. Clay, that he will not allow his name to be used as a candidate for the Presidency—that he will in a short time formally announce this determination; and the convention, therefore, very properly, from motives of delicacy to him, forbore to nominate General Taylor."

"I was one of the secretaries of the Whig Convention—I was present during the whole time it was in session, and heard all of the speeches made in it; and if your correspondent meant to state that any one of the friends of Mr. Clay stated in and to the convention, 'that he will not allow his name to be used as a candidate, and that he will in a short time formally announce this determination,'\* and that in consequence of this statement made to the convention, from motives of delicacy to Mr. Clay, General Taylor was not nominated, then I pronounce the statement utterly and without qualification false; and I can prove it to be false by five hundred men. Nay, so far from its being true, exactly the reverse is the fact.

"In reply to a question by Mr. Page, General Combs stated substantially, if not in so many words, that 'no man was authorized to say whether Mr. Clay's name would or would not be presented to the National Convention; that Mr. Clay reserved to himself, and to himself alone, the right to determine upon that subject at the proper time.' And I will further say, that if the friends of Taylor's nomination had offered a resolution in the Whig Convention, nominating him, it would have been rejected by an overwhelming majority; that the wire-workers knew this, and that in my opinion it was for this and for no other reason such a resolution was not offered.

"February 25.

*"G. J. JOHNSTON."*

"The following comes to us signed with the names of five gentlemen of the highest respectability—three of them members of the Legislature:

*"To the Editors of the Louisville Journal.*

*"FRANKFORT, February 24, 1848.*

"SIRS: In the Daily Journal of to-day we find an editorial account of the Whig meeting in the Capitol on Monday night, which states that Messrs. G. Davis, L. W. Andrews, and Gen. R. Collins made speeches in opposition to the Taylor resolutions introduced in that meeting, but avowed themselves *Taylor men*. This is not a fair statement. They avowed themselves, first and foremost, CLAY MEN—Clay men, as Mr. Andrews expressed it, against the world; but *Taylor men* in the event General Taylor should be the nominee of the party.

"In the letter of 'W.', from Frankfort, in the same number of the Journal, written from here on the 22d instant, there is this other statement: 'There is a large majority here in favor of General Taylor's nomination by the National Convention.'

"We do not know how 'W.' proceeded to ascertain the supposed majority, but we do know that the immense meeting held in the Capitol on Monday night was one of the largest congregations of the delegates at any time assembled together; that it was the only meeting in which the names of Mr. Clay and General Taylor were mentioned in connexion; and that never at any time in that very enthusiastic meeting was the cheering so tremendous, so prolonged, and so deafening, as when Mr. Andrews declared, that if resolutions nominating General Taylor were offered in *Whig State Convention*, he would 'move to strike out the name of Taylor and insert the name of Clay.' The cheering here was absolutely overwhelming, and continued for many minutes, the whole meeting nearly rising to their feet and joining in the applause. And when the Taylor men requested the immense crowd to leave and let them attend to their business, the meeting adjourned with three hearty cheers for Henry Clay, and at least four-fifths of the meeting left the Capitol.

\*NOTE. The statement here referred to, was evidently taken from letters received from Washington, and read to the meeting held the night before the convention met.

It was never doubted by Mr. Clay's friends that if the vote between Clay and Taylor had been taken in that overwhelming meeting, it would have resulted in the preference of Clay by an immense majority.

"In justice to Mr. Clay and his friends throughout the country, we beg you to make public these statements. They will be sustained by the united voice almost of the great crowd which assembled in Frankfort at our Whig State Convention."

### AVAILABILITY OF MR. CLAY.

Aye, he is not only stronger in Kentucky, but he is stronger in every State than any man that can be started or named in the United States, as was shown in convention by tabular statements. He outran, in 1844, every man of the Whig party, in every State, before and since, whether for President, Governor, Congress, or anything else. His vote in 1844 beat General Harrison's in 1840: In Pennsylvania, 17,182; in New York, 6,637; in Ohio, 6,900; in Virginia, 1,176; in New Jersey, 4,967; in Maryland, 2,546; in Rhode Island, 2,104; in Connecticut, 1,227; in Georgia, 1,842; in Delaware, 300; in Kentucky, 2,790; in Michigan, 1,304; in Indiana, 2,565; in Louisiana, 1,577; in Missouri, 7,702; and yet they tell us he *is not strong enough* to run again, and it is proposed to throw away, a second time, such a chance as he had in 1840. In the other States where General Harrison beat Mr. Clay, they both carried them or both lost them, and therefore it made no difference. And when gentlemen ask if his chance is any better now than we thought it in 1844, we answer, no; but it is a great deal better than we thought Harrison's in 1840; and the condition of the country, and the state of the public mind, now corresponds with that of 1840, and not of 1844. The people now (as then) are *ripe for change, and determined on reform*, and we can elect any good Whig we choose. So in Virginia, where it was claimed in convention that the great accession of Whig strength, as exhibited in the result of the elections for members of Congress and of the State Legislature, last spring, had shown his weakness and Gen. Taylor's strength, it was demonstrated that Mr. Clay outran every member of Congress, in their own districts, except two, and his aggregate vote was between 6 and 7,000 more than that of all the Whig candidates for Congress put together; and this is what they call *weakness*. We wish he would impart some of his weakness to a few more Whig candidates for Congress before the next election.

There is another element in this calculation which seems to have been overlooked, and that is, that the vote of Mr. Birney, added to Mr. Clay's, would have made his majority, in 1844, 23,471 over Mr. Polk, and the probability is that that vote will not be cast as heretofore, because they are now satisfied Mr. Clay was right on the Texas question, which they did not then believe. And it only requires a change of 3,000 votes in Pennsylvania to give him that State; *the iron interest alone can do this*, to say nothing of the Catholic and Foreign vote, which may be changed, and is certainly not as hostile to Mr. Clay as it was in 1844.

Mr. Fillmore is regarded as a strong man in New York, and so was Gov. Young at the time of his election. Let us see how the account stands. Last fall Mr. Fillmore's vote was 174,756, and his majority in the State was 38,729; and in 1846, Gov. Young's vote was 198,878, and yet, Mr. Clay's vote in 1844, was 232,482. What evidence of weakness this!

In Pennsylvania, in 1844, Shunk's vote was 160,403, Markle's vote 156,120. In 1847, Shunk's vote was 146,114, Irwin's vote (running on Gen. Taylor's strength) was 128,138; and in 1844, Mr. Clay's vote was 161,203; in Maine, the vote for Governor, in 1847, was 24,304, for Mr. Clay 34,378; in Connecticut, for Governor 30,137, for Mr. Clay 32,832; in Vermont, for Governor 23,933, for Mr. Clay 26,770; in Massachusetts, for Brigg's, Governor, 53,743, for Mr. Clay 67,009; in Rhode Island, for Governor 6,863, for Mr. Clay

7,322; in New Jersey, for Governor 32,251, for Mr. Clay 38,318; in Delaware, for Governor 6,012, for Mr. Clay 6,258; in Georgia, for Governor 41,931, for Mr. Clay 42,100; in Maryland, for Governor 33,730, for Mr. Clay 35,984; in North Carolina, he greatly outran the Congressional candidatest; there was no election for Governor in 1847; thus every where outrunning *all local candidates*. Nothing is proposed to be set down to the questions then at issue, but all to Mr. Clay's weakness; nothing to the Kane letter, by which Mr. Polk was made to appear a better Tariff man than Mr. Clay; nothing is set down to the Texas question; nothing to the Catholic excitement, which no longer exists; nothing is set down to the foreign influence, which is now with us; nothing to the Abolition vote; nothing to frauds practised at the polls, by which he was supposed to have been cheated out of New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Louisiana; nothing to the prosperity of the country, occasioned by the action of the Whig Congress of '42, that had restored the credit of the Government, replenished its Treasury, and given encouragement to trade and industry in '44; but all is set down to his want of strength; and on the other hand, no calculation is made now upon credit, again impaired, the Treasury empty, a large public debt created, and a ruinous and unnecessary war, for which our opponents are to be held responsible, no calculation or allowance is made for all this; all principle is to be abandoned, and nothing but *expediency and availability* is to be consulted, and the champion of all our principles, the strongest and most available too, is to be set aside, to take up a soldier of no experience in political life, upon the idea that the people are silly enough to be attracted only by the drum and fife. With what consistency or propriety can we condemn Mr. Polk for taking from the Senate a *mere civilian*, as a Lieutenant General, to place over experienced military men, and for looking to the ranks of private life for his Brigadiers, Colonels, Majors, &c., when we propose to look to the camp for a *mere soldier*, who has never occupied the humblest position in civil life, to take charge of the affairs of this entire nation, foreign and domestic, to the exclusion of the wisest, most experienced, and most trustworthy statesman of the age. If availability and party expediency will excuse us, will not party expediency also justify him? As we condemned him, so we could not justify ourselves. Is Mr. Polk's position, as President, less important and responsible than that of a Lieutenant General in the army?

#### ANOTHER LETTER FROM GENERAL TAYLOR.

The last letter of General Taylor is also subjoined, dated February 12th, 1848, by which it will be seen that he says he is a Whig, *but not an ultra Whig*. What he means by being a *Whig*, but not an *ultra Whig*, remains to be explained; but he says, moreover, IF WE TAKE HIM, IT MUST BE ON OUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY. Now, we say, we want a President who will be a WHIG on his own responsibility and not ours. But, as in his letter of 30th January, to Peter Sken Smith, he again disclaims any purpose TO LOOK TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE WHIG PARTY, FOR HIS RULE OF ACTION, how General Taylor can be a Whig, and not look to the *principles of the Whig party* as the rule of his action, is a little more than we profess to comprehend. Suppose a Priest were to be selected by the Catholics, and one presenting himself were asked what is your religion, and he were to answer I am a Catholic, but I cannot look to the doctrines or principles of the Catholic church as the rule of my conduct, would they choose him for a Pope or a Priest? But his letter is given entire, in his own words, only adding that Mr. Jefferson was elected as a party candidate, so was Mr. Madison, General Jackson, Mr. Van Buren, Gen. Harrison, and Mr. Polk, and we see no reason why Gen. Taylor should occupy higher ground than any that have gone before him, except General Washington:

BATON ROUGE, LA., Feb. 12, 1848.

MY DEAR COLONEL: Your very kind communication, and the accompanying newspaper, have duly reached me.

In reply to the closing remarks of your letter, I have no hesitation in stating, as I have stated on former occasions, that I am a Whig, though not an ultra one, and that *I have no desire to conceal this fact from any portion of the people of the United States.* I deem it but candid, however, to add, that if the Whig party desire, at the next Presidential election, to cast their votes for me, they must do it on their own responsibility, and without any pledges from me.

Should I be elected to that office, I should deem it to be my duty, and should most certainly claim the right, to look to the Constitution and the high interests of our common country, and not to the principles of *a party*, for my rules of action.

With my sincerest thanks for your expression of friendship, and my best wishes for your success through life, I remain, very truly, your friend and obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR.

COL. A. H. MITCHELL, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Of course, when Gen. Taylor says he will look to the Constitution and the interests of the country as his guide, it is all well enough; no body can object to that; but we have believed he might do that, and yet adopt the principles of the Whig party, and look to them as the rule of his action; certainly there is no demagogue, or loco foco in the land, that would not say as much; even Mr. Polk says that now; and John Tyler did say so to the last; but take this letter, and strip it of all disguise and useless verbiage, and how does it read? Why, a plain English translation would read thus: "I am a Whig, but not an *ultra one*; and I do not wish you to be deceived; if you take me, it must be on *your own responsibility*, for I will make no pledges. I tell you in advance, I will not look to the principles of *your party* as the rule of my actions." Can more or less be made of it? Now, take him, let him adopt the Sub-treasury and Tariff of 1846, and other equally obnoxious measures, as there is too much reason to believe he would, and what have you afterwards, in the face of this letter, to say against it; and who is it that can say it, when he has given us this precaution in advance?

General Taylor is a Whig! But what sort of a Whig? What, in his opinion, constitutes a Whig? Mr. Wise was a Whig, and is now a Democratic elector. Mr. Tyler was a Whig. Mr. Gilmer was "*every inch a Whig.*" Mr. Cushing was a Whig. Mr. Proffit was a Whig. Mr. Meade, now a Democratic member of the House of Representatives, was a Whig elector in 1840. Mr. John M. Patton, the president of the Democratic convention, was a Whig in 1840. Mr. James Garland and Mr. Robert G. Scott, Democratic electors in 1848, were Whigs in 1840. And how many of these gentlemen *admit* that they have changed? The most of them certainly admit no such thing. They only differed, they say, with the rest of the party, as to what constituted a Whig; and they aver that, when they supported Gen. Garrison, he avowed no principles; and, to listen to them, you would believe they were the most upright and downright consistent politicians in the world. Now, when a gentleman says he is a Whig, *but not an ultra one*, is it unreasonable that we should ask him what, in his opinion, constitutes a Whig, and what an ultra Whig; especially when he adds that "*he will not be the exponent of our party doctrines, and will not look to the principles of the Whig party as his rule of action?*" Will we not know something more about him before we elect him to what is regarded as the most elevated and responsible position known to mankind? Will we not even inquire into his views upon the war? We have some *war Whigs!* Is Gen. Taylor for the absorption and annexation of Mexico? Is he for a defensive line, the Sierra Madre, as indicated in his letter to Gen. Gaines? Or is he against the acquisition of any territory? Does he go for indemnity, or against it? Is it unimportant for us to know these things; or must we act in the dark upon these vital questions? We ask, how can a *no-party candidate* consistently and honestly make a *Whig President?*

## DISORGANIZATION OF THE WHIG PARTY.

That there is a design on the part of many (certainly not all) of General Taylor's supporters, and prominent supporters too, to break up the Whig party, and its organization, is too apparent to escape detection.

I know that among his supporters are to be found members of the Whig party, who ever have shared the confidence of the Whigs, and are not the less entitled to do so now than heretofore; but it is an exercise of no more than a common and undeniable right, when I say I think they have been deceived and are in error. Their opinions are entitled, perhaps, to more weight than mine, and therefore I have chosen to give Gen. Taylor's opinions on political subjects in his own language, that the people, the masses of the party, may judge for themselves. Believing as I do, I should be a traitor to the party, not to say what I think, or to postpone it until it might be too late. I believe the Whig party of Virginia has been swallowed up by the Conservative party, (as is best known to those familiar with the secret history of the convention,) and it must be disgorged, or the Whig party in Virginia is lost forever. Is the old Whig party to be sustained or broken up? Look to the speech of the Hon. Wm. Cost Johnson, one of Gen. Taylor's warmest friends, at the New York Taylor meeting. He said: "I myself am a Whig, and I believe Gen. Taylor is a Whig also, BUT NOT A WHIG UPON THE OLD PLATFORM OF WHIGISM; though I have fought for those principles till I had every button whipped off; and I have become wise enough to drop them. When I first started, I went for every question upon the old platform of Whigism. After speaking of all the old issues, he says: "We must get rid of these by taking new men, fresh men, who have not the odium of all these questions upon them, or who can boldly come out from them and declare that these questions are not now the rule of their conduct." Gen. Taylor has done so; he has come out from the old Whig platform. Let those who desire to get off of this old Whig platform, do so, but in the language of Joshua of old, "*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" Now, the difference between Gen. Taylor and his friend Mr. Johnson, and ourselves, is, that we do mean to stand upon the old platform, and we can advocate the claims of no man who does not stand there with us.

Hear also what the New York Herald, of the 27th ultimo, a paper devoted to Gen. Taylor's election, says:

### GENERAL TAYLOR A "DEMOCRAT."

"**GENERAL TAYLOR'S POSITION AND PROSPECTS.**—Having been the first journalist in this country to place the name of General Taylor in connection with the Presidency, it may be supposed that we take a little interest in the progress of his prospects, from time to time, and in the position he occupies at this moment particularly.

"During the last few months, various movements have been made, both by Democrats and Whigs, having for their object the elevation of this distinguished man to the Chief Magistracy; but the two most important movements, of late, are undoubtedly the resolutions passed in his favor by the *Utica Democratic convention* in this State, and the recommendation of him by the Virginia Whig convention, in Richmond, as a candidate to the Whig National Convention, to be held in Philadelphia."

And in another paragraph of the same article the Herald says:

"In this position of things, we think it is but fair to urge General Taylor on the *Democratic National Convention* which is to meet at Baltimore, as their best, most distinguished, and most available candidate. He is as much a Democrat as he is a Whig, and perhaps more of the former than he is of the latter. It is true that a certain portion of the Whig party wish to represent him as a Whig exclusively; but this is done from dishonest motives, and for deceptive purposes."

Can we be blind, deaf, or insensible to the danger in which the Whig party is placed by these various disclosures? Are we, the great Whig party of this nation, reduced to the alternative, after all our labor, and just at the moment when success is about to crown our exertions—are we to be driven to the alternative of taking a candidate who is, in the language of the Herald, “as much a Democrat as a Whig, and perhaps more of the former than the latter?” Why does the Herald support him? Why does Mr. Cost Johnson support him? Why does Gen. Duff Green support him? Why does Mr. John Tyler support him? Why does Judge Bibb support him? Why did the Barnburners’ convention (as it is called) adopt resolutions virtually nominating him? Why does James M. Porter, of Pennsylvania, support him? Why is he said to be acceptable to Mr. Calhoun? Is it because he is a Whig? Are these gentlemen Whigs? Or is it to be supposed they know not what they do? If we are asked, on the other hand, why others who are Whigs support him, we say, they have answered for themselves, because he is AVAILABLE, as they think, and they have not inquired sufficiently into his principles.

#### GENERAL TAYLOR ON THE WILMOT PROVISO.

I will not do Gen. Taylor the injustice to say he will *not* veto the Wilmot Proviso, if he should be elected, and it should pass during his term; but his friend, *and devoted friend*, Mr. Andrew Stewart, of Pennsylvania, certainly thinks he will not, and endeavors to sustain him with the North on that ground. But on other questions we think Gen. Taylor cannot be taken for a Whig.

We give Mr. Stewart’s letter as we find it in the National Intelligencer:

WASHINGTON, March 1, 1848.

**GENTLEMEN:** Since writing my letter of yesterday I have referred to the “Signal correspondence,” and find it, on the point therein referred to, to be as follows:

The editor of the Signal says: “The extension over the continent beyond the Rio Grande of the ordinance of 1787 is an object too high and permanent to be baffled by Presidential vetoes. All that we ask of the incumbent of the highest office under the Constitution is *to hold his hand*, to bow to the will of the people, as promulgated in legislative forms, and restrain the Executive action in its appropriate channels.” General Taylor, in reply, expresses his “high opinion and approval of the sentiments and views embraced in your (his) editorial.”

Yours, &c.

A. STEWART.

#### CLAY AND TAYLOR’S STRENGTH CONTRASTED.

It is a circumstance of the highest importance, and therefore it must not be overlooked, that General Taylor’s chief strength has been exhibited in those States only which NO nominee of a National Convention could hope to carry. We do not mean to deny that, IF HE COULD OBTAIN THE NOMINATION, he could carry the States of Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Maryland; but where else, in all the Eastern, Northern, Middle, and Western Whig States, or States that we might hope to carry, has any development been made that his strength is equal to Mr. Clay’s; and who can doubt that Mr. Clay, if nominated, could as easily carry these States as Gen. Taylor? Now, should we give up certain, reliable Whig States, to take the chance of carrying States that never have given, and probably never will give, a Whig Electoral vote?<sup>\*</sup>

\*Since writing the above I have met with the following confession on this subject from a Tennessee Taylor paper.

**THE PRESIDENCY—Clay and Taylor.**—The politicians seem determined to rule the Presidential roost, and the Whig signs of the times are quite clear that a Whig National Convention will again present the name of Henry Clay to the people as a candidate for the popular suffrage as President. The demonstrations for Mr. Clay, throughout the North and West, are very strong, and, we opine, overpowering; while we regret the demonstrations in behalf of our favorite can-

## PROTEST—REMEDIES PROPOSED.

Upon a review of all the circumstances, I hold that I cannot do less, on my own behalf, and on behalf of the friends of Mr. Clay, and of the Whig party, but especially of those whom I represented in that convention, than *protest in the most earnest manner*, as the convention was notified I would do, against the decision of that convention being received as the sense of the Whigs of Virginia, that General Taylor is preferred to Mr. Clay as the next President of the United States.

It must be apparent that the action of the convention, under all the circumstances, will prove any thing but satisfactory to the numerous friends of Mr. Clay every where, and that *that* dissatisfaction is not likely to advance the interests of General Taylor, in the event of his being selected as the candidate of the party.

Already are murmurs of dissatisfaction heard, which will swell and increase as the circumstances are developed and made known. Already have propositions been made, and determinations expressed, that each party shall try its strength, in the approaching spring, by running a Clay and a Taylor candidate. All this would we avoid, because it can end in nothing but the destruction of the Whig party in Virginia. I would deprecate it as a lasting mischief to the country; and our friends throughout the State are earnestly entreated to abandon so suicidal a policy. We have not been well treated, but let us seek some other less fatal remedy.

Let each county select its Whig candidate, whether for Clay or Taylor; let the Whigs, as they vote, express their preference for Mr. Clay or General Taylor, as they see fit; let TRUTH, fairly and openly obtained, go up to the National Convention; and the beaten party will submit with patience, and help their Whig brethren, in the contest that will ensue, with all their hearts and all their strength.

But if it is not deemed advisable to take the poll in this way, then let the matter rest until after the spring elections are over; let no impediment be thrown in the way of Whig success; let the Taylor party have every opportunity to shew the strength of their candidate; let us unite with them and they with us; and, at the May courts, let each county express its preference, and let the aggregate Whig vote in each electoral district be taken as instructions to the delegate. Any thing, so that the sentiment and wishes of the party may be truly represented in the National Convention. At present, we have but one Clay delegate out of seventeen; is there a man in the commonwealth who believes we are entitled to no more? It is a matter of too much consequence, which may lead to results that can never be repaired, to have the public voice smothered, in this great contest for principle, by the action of an irresponsible body whose existence terminated with its labors.

It is feared that much mischief has been done, which can be repaired only by a resort to one of the plans suggested; and it is earnestly hoped that one may be adopted—we are indifferent which. The only object is to allay discontent, have the *truth* fairly ascertained, and to preserve the unity of the Whig party—which cannot be done by overslaughing the friends of Mr. Clay, constituting, as is believed, an overwhelming majority of the Whigs of Virginia and of the country.

It is feared that the Whig party and its prospects have been sacrificed in Virginia. It is conceived that the Whig convention has declared that the former prin-

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dicate, Gen. Taylor, are mainly confined to some half dozen Southwestern States. All New England, and the Middle States, and Ohio, embracing the main Whig strength of the Union, are undoubtedly warmly in favor of Mr. Clay; and, we apprehend, will prevail in general Whig Convention.—*Memphis (Tenn.) Eagle*, a *Taylor paper*.

ciples of the party either cannot be maintained, or that they are not worth fighting for, by selecting as their candidate one who says he will not look to them as his rule of action. In this I beg leave to differ both with the convention and the convention's candidate. We think they *can* be maintained, and *are* worth fighting for; and *we take them as the rule of our action.* We are aware that the most prominent and active members of that convention did not prefer Mr. Clay as a first or second choice; and that, by them and the convention, the party has not only been endangered, but we fear will be overwhelmed at the ensuing spring elections; *and I am prepared to hear it charged to my account.* But all that shall not deter me from making an appeal to the people, that I made in vain to the convention. They would not listen to us. We stand where we have always stood, endorsed by the whole Whig party of the country; and if there is any disorganization, they are the disorganizers, who have introduced into the camp one who is not of us, nor with us.

JOHN M. BOTTS.

*March 8th, 1848.*

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